

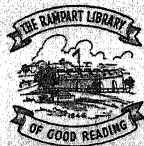
# ALL MY YESTERDAYS

*By*

D. F. KARAKA

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BOMBAY  
THACKER & CO., LTD.  
1944

FIRST PUBLISHED AUGUST 1943  
SECOND IMPRESSION MARCH 1944

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*Set and printed in India by  
R. Bourdon at Western Printers & Publishers' Press,  
15-23, Hamam Street, Fort, Bombay,  
and Published by C. Murphy, Manager,  
Thacker & Co., Ltd., Rampart Row, Bombay.*



To  
K A Y  
of  
*The SPORTING TIMES,*  
most lovable of fellow journalists

**BY THE SAME AUTHOR:—**

Chungking Diary  
Out of Dust  
I Go West  
Oh! You English  
The Pulse of Oxford

*Novels:*

We Never Die  
There Lay the City  
Just Flesh

*Book-Pamphlets:*

Karaka Hits Propaganda

*Compilation (with G. N. Acharya)*

War Prose

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

My thanks are due to the Editors of the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Sunday Standard* for permission to reproduce the articles appearing in these papers. In the case of the articles from the *Daily Herald*, *India Magazine* and the *Oxford Isis*, I have, due to the difficulty of communication in wartime, taken the liberty of presuming their permission, which I trust they will not mind. The articles have been slightly touched up and occasionally annotated. Otherwise they are much the same as they originally appeared.

My thanks are also due to Frank Moraes for suggesting the title. If there is any criticism of the title on the ground that it is too pretentious or presumptuous, I feel it should rightly be addressed to him!

August, 1943.

D. F. KARAKA.

## COLOUR BAR

April, 1934.

*[This is perhaps the first article of any consequence though I had fumbled with writing before. It appeared on the feature page of the Daily Herald at a time when that paper's circulation was about 2,000,000 a day. It was the Easter vacation and I had just come down from Oxford and was spending a few days in London before going abroad. The morning on which the article appeared I was running up and down London tubes and jumping on and off buses trying to find out for myself who would be reading this article of mine. From about eight in the morning to eleven when I had had enough of it, I found two men glancing through it and one actually read it. He was a kindly sort of man.]*

**C**OLOUR in most things is a source of happiness; in man it is the cause of much humiliation. The Colour Bar is the most inhuman of human prejudices.

To the man to whom it is applied, it is demoralising. It causes a bitterness in him which he carries with him all through his life.

The Colour Bar from without leads to a Colour Bar from within the man himself. Instinctively he holds back from certain things. His road to success is lined with so many obstacles which this prejudice has created.

I must confess that Oxford has no such unpleasant memories for me. But I am one of a fortunate few. There are hundreds of thousands of coloured men scattered all over the world for whom this Colour Bar has been a living hell.

There are Indians and other coloured men in England who will substantiate this. So many of them have felt it. It is, therefore, only those few who have a chance of being heard who can open the eyes of Englishmen to this injustice which so deeply affects the lives of many human beings.

But even Oxford is not free from the Colour Bar. No doubt there is a generation of Englishmen now "up" at Oxford which realizes the unfairness of such prejudices.

Yet there are still some among them, brought up in the old School of thought, who cannot regard their fellow-undergraduates from among the coloured races as their equals. Somehow they are instinctively aware of colour in a man.

Clubs in Oxford close their doors to coloured undergraduates. This they have a perfect right to do. A club should be free to pick and choose its own members.

But in one particular case it objects to Indians being entertained on its premises by its own members. Englishmen should extend to a coloured man as much courtesy as they expect from him.

There was only a mild protest last year at the exclusion of a coloured man from the tennis team sent out to the United States to represent Oxford and Cambridge against the leading American Universities.

His qualification was beyond any question of doubt. His ranking in the Oxford side was proof of that. The team was intended to consist of the best in the two universities. What explanation can there be for such an unfair exclusion? Oxford, therefore, is not wholly free from the Colour Bar.

Outside Oxford—specially during the vacations—conditions are much worse. The first rap on my knuckles came from a well-known tourist agency in London.

It was December, 1930. The first term at Oxford had just finished. The deposit was accepted. The rooms were booked. They saw the passport.

The sudden realization of nationality made them refuse to hand over the tickets for their advertised winter sports tour. They safeguarded themselves against any action for breach of contract by a clause in the booking conditions entitling them to break a contract "with anyone who was not of a pure white race".

What was this if not a polite enforcement of the Colour Bar? Can you blame a man for his bitterness when within a few months of his stay in this country (England) he meets with such treatment from a tourist agency whose main purpose is to provide facilities for travel to foreigners from all parts of the world?

It was not the personality of the individual that was objected to. It was his colour. I was assured it applied equally to all coloured people. And therein lies its unfairness. Would it not have been rather ungracious to refuse a "Duleep" or a "Pataudi"?

Hotels in England have refused admittance to prominent Indians and to celebrated coloured stars from the United States.



It is not often that the British public hears of these individual instances. Many coloured people prefer to bear the insult in silence. They have a sense of self-respect which even colour cannot bar.

Sometimes they give vent to their feelings. There may even be a mild outburst but nothing is ever done about it.

The behaviour of the Englishman abroad is much the same. Even when out of his own country, he carries his prejudices with him. Parents tell their grown-up people not to associate with coloured people. Perhaps they are afraid of contamination.

It is a great shame that English parents should put such ideas into the minds of their children. To brush such prejudices aside, the child would have to go against his whole upbringing.

The causes of this 'colour prejudice can be traced farther back than this century. The opportunities the white races have had for exploiting coloured people are largely responsible for it.

It is only when there is domination by one people over another that such prejudices can exist. It gives rise to a feeling of superiority which is stimulated by success.

The progress of Western civilisation has given the white races a self-assurance which borders on conceit. They are far too conscious of their achievements. It makes them look down on the 'coloured man because he does not conform to the standards of their civilisation which is foreign to him.

The finer the education of the coloured man and the more refined his culture the more reason has he to resent that there should be in this country (England) such a strong prejudice against coloured people.

Often his career is ruined, his ideals lost, his faith in himself shaken. He may be endowed with great talent, but colour sometimes makes a mockery of it all.

Nature must have a very cruel sense of humour. If English people realized the gravity of the injury they inflict on coloured people they would perhaps not insist on enforcing the Colour Bar to the extent to which they do.

The time has come when the colour problem has become vital to a better understanding between the East and the West.

The solution is not in the hands of any one individual. The attitude of white races throughout the world must change.

Perhaps this will only come about when coloured people are in a position to assert their independence. It is only when the white races feel compelled to show respect to coloured people that the Colour Bar will fade away. Freedom alone can command such respect.

Europe today is not in a very happy frame of mind.

It has no time for the colour question. The race for armaments, the decay of Parliamentary institutions, the rise of Fascism, Dictatorship displacing democracy, Liberty itself becoming only an abstract ideal—these are the immediate problems of Europe. It requires only a spark to blow up the whole edifice of Western civilisation.

Is this the time for the white races to assert their superiority? Will pride stoop only after a fall?

—*Daily Herald.*

## THE OXFORD I KNOW

May, 1934.

**M**R. J. B. Priestly wrote sometime ago an article entitled *Turn The Limelight Off The Oxford Circus*. His complaint was that of late Oxford had been too much in the press and in the public eye; and that it was inconsistent with its function as a University, where undergraduates should "Learn their lessons". It is not that Oxford seeks the limelight. On the contrary, it is the searching eye of the press that has turned itself for once on the youth of this generation. What happens in Oxford today is apparently worth reporting. This is the main reason for its being so much in the limelight.

No doubt Oxford has changed. It nurses a generation which is essentially post-war and whose purpose and whose ideals are entirely different from those of the generation that went before it. It has moved with the age. It has ceased to make undergraduate life an unreal existence. The gulf between Oxford life and the hard struggle for existence in this world of evergrowing competition is not so apparent and so difficult to bridge as it was before.

Let not people be carried away by the impressions of an enthusiastic journalist week-ending in Oxford who depicts Oxford as the home of a debauched, degenerate, good-for-nothing type of undergraduate, a

waster of his own time and his father's money; or of rebels against authority, or of 'yellow-bellied cowards' too disloyal to fight for King and Country. This, no doubt, makes a pretty picture of undergraduate life. Perhaps it has new value. But it is as unfair to Oxford as it is untrue.

For beneath all this is a sober Oxford, often dull, certainly hard-working, but above all very young. The undergraduate's life is simple but not drab. People sometimes sneer at the idea of the undergraduate at work. It is a picture they do not often see. And how could they? No paper would be interested in the undergraduate seated by the fire, doing what he modestly calls "a spot of work"; or strolling along the river, or in the parks, taking in that atmosphere so conducive to study. It is to the normal life of the great majority, to which we must turn, if we want an accurate picture of Oxford.

The clock has just struck eight! The scout, that curious mixture of butler, valet and chambermaid, and a good friend, gives a beaming smile and a call which must be answered. The day depends so much on the congeniality of one's scout. Five minutes and you are in chapel or at "rollers" in a pair of old greys, a high-necked pull-over, a coat of some description—and a gown. There is not much time for an elaborate toilet. After breakfast, simple but very wholesome, the day's work begins. It may consist of attending lectures, of working in libraries, of experimenting in laboratories, or even reading in the seclusion of your room. The great bulk of work is done between nine and one. Of course there is eleven o'clock coffee—a popular feature of

Oxford life. But we can hardly say that indulging in a cup of coffee to kill time between lectures or to meet a friend is an extravagance and a vice and the hall-mark of the degenerate.

After lunch, which usually consists of bread and cheese and perhaps a pint of ale, Oxford, clad in flannels or rowing shorts, drifts to the playing fields for rugger or soccer or to tug an oar on the river. Everyone plays something. He may or may not be very proficient. A Blue is always respected though not regarded as a superman. A quick bath! Then tea and a spot of work again before the shades of night have fallen.

It is time for dinner. The great bell chimes from the cloistered towers. The antiquated staircases rattle under the tread of eager feet. The door of the great hall opens. Dinner is served. It is a picturesque spectacle. At High Table in immaculate evening dress subdued by the dignity of academic robes, sit the Dean or the Rector, and the dons. In strange contrast to this small and select group is a mass of undergraduates, their tattered gown hurriedly pulled-over their tweeds. Old silver—the heritage of hundreds of years, emblazoned with the college crest and the coat of arms of its founder—glittering in the soft yellow light of the candles, the solemn Grace, whose sonorous Latin is recited by the Senior Classical Scholar, creates an atmosphere which is so typically Oxford. Some unfortunate individual has committed a minor breach of college etiquette. Perhaps he has uttered two words of Latin or three of French or a line of poetry—and the penalty is ceremoniously inflicted. He is sconced!



Four pints of beer passed around his table in a huge silver sconce-jug are debited to his account.

Anything might happen after "Hall". The serious-minded wend their way to the Economics Society to hear a Durbin or a Hawtrey, or to the English Club to hear a Chesterton or a Belloc, or to some political club to hear a Baldwin, a Lloyd George or a Macdonald, or to some Science Society to hear an Einstein or a James Jeans. Oxford affords a perfect opportunity for hearing the recognized leaders of modern thought. Musicians gather at the Music Club or the Bach Choir or the concerts of Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic. Those with histrionic ability frequent the OUDS whose amateur productions are watched by the best critics of the drama. In the Raleigh, the Durham, the Lotus, someone is always reading a paper on something. On Thursday night there is a debate at the Union the recognized centre of political life.

But perhaps the more typical Oxford evening is spent around the fire. An old panelled room, obviously been 'Lived in', comfortably disarranged without being too untidy, with books and papers littered over the table, the half-finished manuscript of an essay on the desk, cigarette ash on the carpet and a roaring fire making patterns of light and shade—a flickering chiaroscuro—all this makes a perfect background for serious conversation or for mere frivolity.

The charge against Oxford is that it has too much leisure. This is perhaps the exaggeration of a truth. There is infinite leisure to talk. But it is this mutual exchange of thought and ideas, this "Criticism of life" as Arnold might have called it which is moulding its character, that is the *raison d'être* of Oxford.

In summer even these rooms are deserted for an evening on the river. From Magdalen Tower to Cherwell Arms it winds and sleekly glides past Addison's Walk, through the parks, past a woman's college or two, under the arches and antiquated bridges by the meadows. Innumerable punts, an odd canoe, paddle aimlessly up and down, discreetly avoiding the bathing pool at Parson's Pleasure (No Women and No Bathing Suits). The melodies from a hundred gramophones make a symphony not unfinished but unrecognized. The light of the moon sneaks through the leaves to illuminate an unknown face. But it needs no face to launch a thousand punts.

One of the happiest changes in Oxford is to be found in its women. The cult of intellectualism, with its attributes of straight hair, horn-rimmed glasses, heavy low-heeled brogues and twenty-page essays still prevails. But a new generation combining charm with intelligence, has realized that the name of Plato brings out all that is worst in men. Women too are cultivating the amenities of Oxford life. The Pentagon had thrown its doors open to men. Even their first magazine, the *Lysistrata*, has been published. So much for the undergraduates.

But it has never been said that women were Oxford's obsession. We are, however, charged with having an obsession for religion and politics. People protest that our interest in these brings us too much into the limelight, and that we should, as Mr. Priestly says, "learn our lessons." But why shouldn't we talk at "monster meetings", whether on religion or politics, if by these means we are forming our character at the

most impressionable period of our lives? If the purpose of Oxford is to be just a glorified Public School, then, perhaps, it could be said that our sole aim should be to learn our lessons. But this is no longer so—if ever it was. The great purpose of Oxford is to afford individuals every opportunity of moulding their character, so that they can adjust and adapt themselves to whatever circumstances they may, in later life, find themselves in. Must we curb our activities and lose this great opportunity merely because our activities interest the press and the public?

The outside world forgets that it is a post-war generation which is now up at Oxford. There are not many of us who were more than a year or two old when the last Great War began. That war has buried a past. Must we of this generation be guided by the canons of thought and behaviour which led to so much bloodshed and to the breaking up of so many families and homes? There is nothing to bind us to the generation that went before us. The chain of gradation is broken. The connecting link lies dead and cold, scattered all over the battlefields of Europe. The world today, therefore, rightly feels interested in the ideals of those young men who may, perhaps, shape the future of the world.

Will this age be as destructive as the one that went before? This is the question uppermost in the minds of many thinking men and women. It is because there is in the activities of the Oxford of today an expression of a desire to create something that the spotlight is turned on it. The reason why the press of the world made so much fuss about the Pacifist resolu-

tion of the Oxford Union was because, although adverse critics called it badly-phrased, clumsy, tactless, it was still the expression of the desire of those who dominate Oxford's political life to avoid the possibility of future wars. The spotlight turned on it, not because it was something new, but because it was so emphatically said. Young men of our age do not say or do things for cheap publicity. We do not get any particular pleasure from being called "yellow bellied cowards". After all, the young men that are up at Oxford are decent sons of decent parents and they feel it intensely when base motives are imputed to them for the expression of their opinions.

There can be no more reliable authority on the undergraduates of Oxford than the Proctors, who are responsible for the behaviour of undergraduates in the University and of their conduct from day to day. The Senior Proctor from Lincoln on his retirement from that office which is held for one year, said: "It is by her undergraduates of the present day that Oxford tends to be judged. What is their condition? Without hesitation we assert that they are right worthy of the best traditions of our great University. At every point of contact we have been more and more impressed by their courtesy, loyalty and industry.....The majority of our junior members realize fully that the main purpose of their residence here is study, to which other activities are subsidiary, though our experience has led us to recognize that the manifold interests of the undergraduates form a valuable part of their education.....Some, however, long to soar high into the political empyrean before they have tried their wings, and are somewhat liable to allow their impulse

to forestall their reason. But the worst that can be laid to their charge is that, seeing how many sores there are in the world, they imagine the cure to be easier than it really is. Years may bring disillusion and they may even become tolerant of things they now deem abuses. However, they are in the process of searching for the truth, and it is unreasonable for older people to blame them if, in their venturesome navigation, they rest awhile on an uncharted spot."

Perhaps, after all that is the only real charge that can be made against Oxford—adolescence! Oxford would but plead guilty. Whatever may be the disillusion which age and experience may bring to light, this much at least will be said of us—that we looked upon the world as practical men, and although we failed, we did at least make a humble effort to ameliorate the sufferings of those who were less fortunate.

It was in this spirit, without any political prejudices or party bias, that undergraduates of all shades and opinions helped of their own accord to feed and cheer the Hunger Marchers on their way to Westminster to put their case before the Government of the day. It was indeed a revelation to many to see the conditions of poverty under which men live in a civilisation that denies them the right to earn a wage that would enable them to live the standard of life demanded by that civilisation. It was as Mr. Lansbury said, "only an act of Christian charity," and as such it should be regarded.

Such is the Oxford I know. It is not possible in a few pages to give a complete picture of the activities of so great a University. With its dreamy spires and its Gothic structures, Oxford has always been "so

lovely, so venerable, so serene", the home of culture and great scholastic learning. Today it is more. It turns out practical men. Let us, therefore, hope that those who leave it at the end of their three years will prove themselves worthy of the institution to which they belonged. Let their ambition not be for honour and distinction. Let it rather be to serve humanity and to make the world fit for human beings to live in. Let them be fearless of the scorn of public opinion and the cheap sneers of journalists. Let them do what they think is right. That is the lesson which we must learn. There is no doubt in the minds of those of us who know Oxford intimately what the verdict of history on our generation will be. The Oxford we know is in our faith, in our blood, in our love.

*India Magazine.*



## CHURCHILLISM

November 1934.

*(The month and year of this article should be noted.)*

THOUGH never yet officially defined, Churchillism is universally understood. This.....ism is a product of this century, taking its name from one who has alternately played a great and pathetic part in the history of (British) politics. Churchillism, however, does not begin and end with the Right Honourable Gentleman from whom it derives its name. A whole crowd of minor luminaries hang from this great chandelier. But the figure that predominates outshadows any of the hangings. With years this chandelier has lost his brilliance. The cut-glass is beginning to show signs of wear.

It is perhaps impertinent of me, till recently only an undergraduate, to venture to criticize the politics of one who has held and distinguished himself in various high offices of State. But Churchillism is so impertinent in itself, so conceited in its dogmas, so self-assured in its righteousness, that by no code of etiquette or public morals could any attack on it be called unjustified. Did the Rt. Hon. Gentleman hesitate for a moment to call a great Indian leader "a naked fakir"? Did not Mr. Churchill openly declare at the time of the Round Table Conferences that he had no desire to discuss the

Indian question with men like Mr. Gandhi. When those whose knowledge of India dates as far back as 18..., or whose vision extends to the narrow paths of a civil service, which they served so faithfully that they would not even look around...when men like these feel themselves sufficiently qualified to litter this country (Britain) with their dicta and to speak on behalf of three hundred million Indians, then there is no doubt that the *ne plus ultra* of impertinence has been reached. Where is my impertinence as compared to theirs? And the very fact that Churchillism has acquired for itself the status that it now occupies, is itself of sufficient public importance to take criticism beyond the pale of personal enmity.

A word must be said about the master-mind that is behind Churchillism. Without the slightest hesitation one admits the greatness of the man who is the inspiration of this abstraction. Even the harshest critics of this scion of Marlborough will not grudge him his great talents. A first class speaker, a most brilliant writer, great capacity for work, tremendous courage, loyalty and devotion to whatever cause he may be advocating, an unflinching sincerity in his utterances...these are some of his characteristics one is forced to admit. Yet there is material in this one life of which a great tragedy can be written. For he was born with an insatiable ambition, a lust for power and greatness that can only be compared with a Tamburlaine and an instinct for perseverance which breaks every law of human patience. The tragedy of it all is that he never got half as near to the greatness to which he aspired. There was always just something that prevented him from being a leader of men. That something was within

the man himself.....it was inborn in his character. As Robert Bernays, that brilliant young member of Parliament, once said in Oxford (I cannot vouch for exact words): "Churchill wishes that life should be one great tragedy and that he himself should always be in the centre of it." That is the keynote of journalism. What harm may be inflicted on Churchillism *en passant* is in Churchillism a minor detail.

I must confess that from a very early age I had an inborn repulsion for everything that Churchillism stood for. Oxford and England convinced me that my turning away from it was not without reason. For Churchillism is far from what is best in the English character. In every sphere of politics it takes an attitude which is incompatible with the trend of modern thought and opinion. In international affairs it stands for armaments, for an exaggerated idea of security, which goes to increase the already large sense of distrust in which international affairs are by now soaked. In its Home policy it is definitely the attitude of the gentleman lounging in his West End club, when hundreds of thousands of their fellowmen have barely the means of sustenance. It is in its Indian policy, however, that Churchillism acts with a vengeance, dogging the progress of that country at every stage of its history, pouring its venom on those whose money provided the very salt which fed them, kept them in comfortable clothing and educated their children. It is, therefore, men like these—men who follow the banner of Churchillism—that are responsible for the bitterness and the hatred in what might otherwise have been a great British Empire. And when I see a man with such infinite resources and endowed by nature with great gifts using his talents

and his power to further Churchillism, then I feel that the only epitaph that would be appropriate is : "O Iago, Iago, the pity of it, Iago."

My one great ambition was to speak against the Rt. Hon. Gentleman on the floor of the Oxford Union. It was never realized. The nearest I got was to ask him a question or two when he addressed a meeting of the Conservative Association at Oxford. I remember the occasion very vividly. I remember the events that led upto it. The only hall in Oxford that could have suited the large audience that heard him was the debating hall of the Oxford Union, which was hired out to them. If I had had the last word that meeting would never have been convened on those premises, but all the influence I could bring to bear was not sufficient to reject the application for the hall. Well, the Rt. Hon. Gentleman arrived and it was the opinion of a great number that his appearance was not such a great success after all. His great mistake was to adopt the method of questions and answers instead of a straight speech on any of his pet subjects. For what we wanted to hear was his fiery oratory, his bitterness in attack, those *ex-tempore* remarks which were so carefully rehearsed. That would have roused an undergraduate audience more than a dry collection of opinions, which were neither authoritative nor profound.

I can see him even now, standing at that despatch-box, embodying all that Churchillism stands for—a small man delivering judgment with the air of a prophet and I know now as I knew then that so long as Churchillism carries any weight in England, the huge gulf on the Indian question can never be peacefully bridged.

*The Oxford Isis.*

## FROM GANDHI TO NEHRU

December 1936

TWO men of our times—contemporaries—both fighters for freedom—stand out far above the rank and file as leaders in that struggle for freedom. Historians may class them as contemporaries, for the difference of a few years is a mere nothing in the long journey to eternity. Yet between them—between that short space of time which separates Gandhi from Nehru, there is a gulf that can never be bridged. It is not a renaissance of old ideas nor a re-incarnation of old dogmas. It is the beginning of a new era—without precedent, without a past, born unconventionally, without parents.

Transitions the world has seen more than once. Victorian England has evolved itself into a neo-Edwardianism, the France of the Louis' is now the France of the people; the Russia of the Czar is now the Russia of Stalin. The Germany of the Kaiser is now *Deutschland uber alles* of Adolf Hitler.

Transitions—evolutions—revolutions you might call them. But one fact emerges out of all of them. It is that this world has changed for better or for worse. The counterpart of this in India would be the change from bureaucracy to self-government, from Imperialism to Swaraj, from despotism to democracy. It would be a change only in the method of government. From

Gandhi to Nehru is a different tale. It is the change in the outlook of India itself to the problems that confront it.

What do these apostles stand for? I remember one evening at Oxford when Gandhi had come over to that city of cloistered towers to speak to the young Indians who had gone to that shrine to imbibe its culture and anarchy. There we had gathered to get a glimpse of the one man over whom a veil of mystery hung like a shroud—a veil more difficult to penetrate than those which have obscured Zaharoff and Lawrence of Arabia. Yes, mystery—so it was. No one could fathom his depths. He had come there as a representative of India at the Round Table (Conference) and the world watched his movements and noted down his utterances, knowing as they did that on them depended the destiny of two nations and two peoples. Yet he remained quite unperturbed about the responsibilities that rested on his shoulders. Serene, tranquil, like a little child himself, he played with the children of the East End (of London), the children of the slums, the children of the ghetto.

English people failed to understand him. He was too simple in his utterances, too ascetic in his mode of life, too Christian for the Christians. They had been told that wherever he walked was holy ground, and that this country of teeming millions followed him even as they would a new Messiah. Wherever he appeared, there was an instinctive realization of his nebulous presence. Yet he was a man of the people, an equal among equals, a follower himself of the doctrine he preached. He did not walk at the



head of a procession, for he disliked ostentatious organisation. He was with them, around them, walking now behind, now in the middle, sometimes even in front. He never really cared.

With these thoughts in our minds we had gathered that evening in Oxford to see once again this living marvel of India. The picture is still vivid in my mind—the picture of that restless gathering breathlessly awaiting his presence, constantly turning round to see if he had arrived. Time hung heavy on our hands sharpened as our feelings were with curiosity, disturbed as were our emotions by something within us which we knew was noble and uplifting. And the moment arrived when in the doorway appeared this little figure draped in white *khadi* walking beside the Master of Balliol, whose guest he was. With one spontaneous gesture the assembly rose as a mark of respect, almost unbelievable when you come to think that in this crowd was clustered all the blasé indifference, the indiscretion, the adolescence, which is Youth. Yet so it was, and even as I write, the recollection of it brings back that same sensation and I feel the cold chilliness passing through me now.

That was Gandhi. That was the saint, philosopher and ascetic rolled up in one. That was the man who awoke the peoples of India from their sleep and led them to the seashore to make salt. That was the man whose popularity officials regarded with trepidation. That was the man whose whole life was based on one fundamental idea—*Satyagraha*. It was as if Christ had come to preach once again the Sermon on the Mount. That idea of non-violence Gandhi preached in every gesture of his and his weapon of conversion was his own

persuasiveness. He did not go to the masses and say that Imperialism was a bad thing, or that bureaucracy fast needed overhauling. They would never have understood all that. What he did was to form his opinion himself, to plan the remedy and then to use the masses to supply the force of his argument—the only argument that Government ever listened to. It was not so much what he did that worried the officials. It was rather what he could do. Every day it was becoming more and more obvious that the threads of cast, creed and religion were weaving themselves together into the one strong chord which was the Indian nationalism, increasing in length and thickness, encircling the peninsula from Cape Comorin to Kanchanjanga, from the furthest point West to the last extremity in the East. On every inch of that mighty chord was written the name of Gandhi. In his *Ashram* he would sit with his legs crossed, always planning, always weaving; such was the India of Gandhi, the India of the non-co-operation movements, the India of our fathers. Yet it was only the India of fifteen years ago.

Today as we look beyond the horizon another figure stalks across the grey skies, sleek, smart manly. Upright of carriage he walks on the troubled waters, without fear, without compassion, without apology. His name is Jawaharlal Nehru. The son of a rich Allahabad lawyer and himself educated at Harrow and Cambridge, it can hardly be said that he came from the masses. Far from it. He was born and nurtured on the very best that money could buy. His enlistment for the cause of India was not from necessity but from choice. His convictions, deep-rooted as they are, have

been arrived at as much in his digs at Trinity as in his father's palatial home. His outlook on life is still essentially Western. The East supplies the colour and the emotional background of his life. He is a highbrow, a thinker, a follower of Lenin and Marx, a modern fired with that intensity of purpose which knows no bounds, and within him is a bitterness which runs through the blood.

From the point of view of the masses, he is a man from outside, a man who leads them to battle, always ahead of his followers, ahead of his times, always marching, marching to his own pulsating syncopation. He refuses to recognize any regime which conflicts with his conception of the ideal Socialist State. If power were in his hands, he would use all the modern methods of the Loubayanka and the Reichstag. He believes in himself even as dictators do. He does little things which bring him nearer to Hitler and Mussolini. He takes a salute in his own dictatorial fashion—only their shirts he has cast away. He is a firebrand, creating in those with whom he comes into contact a restless atmosphere. He is a soldier who feels lost in times of peace. Like Napoleon he is always wanting to lead whole armies. To the young he is a stimulant—a sort of mental tonic maddening as it works.

It is so different from the balm of Gilead and Gandhi. With his own thoughts he cloisteres himself, wondering what the morrow will bring, struggling even within himself as one does in prison walls, struggling to break down the barriers, the chains that have encrusted his freedom. On the battlefield, fighting he will die. He would be happy with no other death. Heine once said and so does Nehru say now: "Lay on my coffin a

sword for I was a soldier in the war for the liberation of humanity." It is typical of the man.

And so we pass from Gandhi to Nehru—from that peace that passeth all understanding to that perpetual strife, that eternal fire, burning even as it does over the tomb of the unknown soldier. The old men feel out of place in the atmosphere of this Nehruian India. They have no use for his revolutionary outbursts. They have no sympathy with his socialism. Age had numbed their senses—it is the young who find in him the expression of their pent up emotions, and the counterpart of their great ideals. They too have moved from Gandhi to Nehru.

—*The Sunday Standard.*

## HIS KINGDOM FOR A WOMAN

*December 1936*

**A** sad stillness pervades over England. Its eyes are filled with tears. Its heart feels a deep emotion at the loss of its most popular hero—that King of England, Edward VIII who was nearer to them than any King has ever been. He passes out of the kingly picture of his own accord, laying down the reins of High office, relinquishing the responsibilities of State, to spend the rest of his days in the company of the woman he loves.

Prudish England—the England that is still living in the stuffy morals of the eighteen-nineties, the England that has not shaken of the chains of that sordid conventional morality—must take the blame for this loss, which will be felt the world over by the rich and poor alike—the loss of one who had he been allowed to reign over the destinies of England and the Empire, might have knitted together the discordant elements that were working for its destruction, and brought peace into this world, such as it had never hoped for in recent years.

He was a king of the people. His recent visit to Wales had worried the Conservative Government. His amazing popularity with the miners, his obvious socialism, his genuine sorrow for poverty his work for the unemployed, had ensured for him a following over

the people of England over whom he ruled. Politicians, statesmen, the high clergy faded into insignificance in his presence.

In the broadcast to his people he had said: "I am better known to you as the Prince of Wales and although I now speak to you as the King, I am still the man who has had that experience and whose constant effort will be to promote the well-being of his people." All through his short though brilliant Kingship, the promise he made at his accession he carried out in every gesture of his. No King of England had thought of subscribing from his private revenues to the Miners' Strike Fund.

Ex-King Edward VIII had done so. He regarded it as an act of Christian charity—an act quite apart from his ceremonial office of State. He had fulfilled the prophecy made about him many years ago that when he succeeded his father, he would be the first working man's King of England.

Formalities meant nothing to him. The ceremonial pomp, the empty nothingness of Court precedent, he was out to destroy. What he wanted was that the ordinary man and his wife and children should find him as accessible as he was to the Prime Minister and the members of the Cabinet. He always desired that the celebrations for his Coronation should be a people's show.

He lived his life fully as no King had done before him. He acted and behaved as ordinary men would. He disliked being shadowed by his bodyguard and his safety he entrusted not to private detectives, nor to



Scotland Yard but to the people of England whom he trusted.

As Prince of Wales, he was the right hand man of his father and had represented him on several occasions, discharging his duties with a dignity and charm that befitted such occasions. He was the first Ambassador of England—the greatest salesman British Industry ever had. He had stood before the Cenotaph in Whitehall—a living symbol of the feeling of England in that Two Minutes' Silence which commemorates the tragedy of the (last) Great War. He had stood at Vimy Ridge on the occasion of the unveiling of that memorial, and Canadian pilgrims who had flocked to that graveyard in France knew that he was the living embodiment of Canada, of England, of the Empire. Even the President of France could not help feeling that before him stood that faithful ally who had stood by France in the hour of her greatest need.

Now he reverts to the life of a country gentleman. His retirement though of his own choice, has in a way been forced upon him. The 'Old Guard' that still professes to dictate the moral code, has taken upon itself to lay down the law for its King. By their insistence that Kingship should comply with their prudish mentality, they have overstepped the bounds and made encroachments even in the regions of his heart. They did not rise to the occasion and forget the pettiness even where his happiness is concerned.

We have seen in recent years great monarchies crumble overnight. Some of the mightiest governments of Europe, and of the world, have been uprooted on the slightest provocation. We have seen the sad

spectacle of exiled monarchs wandering over the face of the world, without a kingdom, without a people, often without even a home, but Edward VIII does not leave the throne like the others. This abdication is his last kingly act.

As king of England he was the first gentleman in the land. He takes his leave of the people, and his country, leaving it even a greater gentleman than he ever was. It is rather like a page from the romantic tales which we, as children, had read and believed and which in old age have come true.

He shall never have to live in exile, for there will always be a place for him in the hearts of those of his people who are like him, young, human and understanding. For them it does not matter what choice he makes in life. For them it does not matter whether he carries on his head the golden crown. It is the man that matters and of this they have had proof.

On the surface it might appear that orthodoxy has triumphed—that tradition has been upheld and that the sacred constitution of England has been saved. Yet I ask myself, as every thinking young man must—was all this worth the sacrifice that England made? Let the Old Guard rejoice, but it is a moral victory for youth, a triumph of the new generation. The abdication of Edward VIII was the greatest gesture that youth could have made in the face of the opposition of the old generation which will never bend. It is the greatest blow that has been dealt to tradition and orthodoxy, from which it will be difficult for them to survive.

The great men of England and the Empire may write about the constitutional aspect of this grave and

unprecedented situation. All this may be very important, but to us, little men, they fade into insignificance in comparison with the one predominant fact which emerges from this episode and which is that youth must have the right to decide what is right and what is moral in all matters which affect it. The story of King Edward VIII and his love for a woman, of whom English society with its smug complacency did not approve, has happened in many a middle class home before. Sometimes youth has renounced its rights and bowed to the will of age. Sometimes it has defied it. It speaks volumes of Edward VIII that he did not, as King, put this highly controversial matter to the test. It would have caused factions which would have done great harm to the England he loved. A verdict at the polls, however great the majority may have been, would always have tinged his happiness with sorrow and all through the rest of his life he would have felt, as many in his position would, the uncomfortable feeling that there were among his subjects even a few who differed from him in the choice of his Queen. It was obvious that either he must sacrifice his love for a woman and his principles and remain a puppet in the hands of the older generation, or he must abdicate his right to the throne. There is little doubt in our minds as to the correctness of his choice. Sad though we may be in losing him, we rejoice that there is amongst us at least one who has the courage of his convictions and who has told orthodox, conventional, prudish society what he really thought of it. It is not only a great day in the history of England and the Empire. It is a great day in the history of the conflict of generations, a great day for the youth of the world.

It is almost unbelievable that in the twentieth century a man should be found willing to sacrifice his kingdom for a woman; it is more unbelievable when we realize that the kingdom he has given up is the greatest in the world. Yet the fact of his abdication remains. Let us hope the England of tomorrow will be more sympathetic and understanding than the England of yesterday.

The sad news has arrived. The king has abdicated; it is followed by rejoicing, for the people say: "Long live the King".

—*The Sunday Standard.*

## THE IRON IN MY SOUL

December 1936.

**I** remember standing before the leaning Tower of Pisa and asking what was wrong with it and the ingenious guide replied: "Nothing, except that it is perpetually in danger of falling." I ask now what is wrong with Bombay Society and the answer is much the same. Bombay Society!—This stronghold of the Upper 400, clustered in the picturesque gateway of the East, huddle together like cattle, driven from the heights of Malabar hill to the cemented plains of Colaba, this mighty herd of vaselined men and powdered sirens, these Jezebels and Messieurs Beaucaire, these hopeful men and ever-expectant women, spells itself Society with the capital "S".

Let's take the lid off and clean out the dust bins. Let's look into this mumbo-jumbo of 'select' people and see what's wrong with them. Let's have a conflagration to clean up the garbage as Nero did for Rome and Hitler for modern Germany. Let's see why society has to be spelt with a capital "S".

You have seen in the evenings bloated pigmies with gold watch and chain driving down Cuffe Parade in streamlined cars, purring over the stretch at two miles an hour. Dignity *in excelsis*! You have seen their women—wives that have been bound to them by the tie of matrimony—sitting next to them, bejewelled in

diamond bracelets, with emeralds and rubies filling up the space left blank by their low-cut blouses. These two have met in holy wedlock to produce children to the greater glory of God. And as I see this gaudy panorama pass, I feel there is something wrong somewhere.

What sort of people are these? They are not sophisticated, nor blasé. They have no finesse and little subtlety. Their conception of humour does not come up to the Balliol standard and they are comfortable with neither *Punch* nor *Razzle*. They are moral people. Their morality they shout from the housetops and they refuse to powder their noses in public. They do not believe in promiscuity but like holding hands. They dislike cabaret artists and cinema stars, and they think that all young men who return from England leave behind a wife and two children. Their conception of sin is a cottage at Versova.

For all their efforts at refinement, they are not refined. They do not know the difference between *kultur* and culture, they measure knowledge by the yard stick. They cannot distinguish between the *chic* and the *chichi*, between the ex-deb and the *demi-mondaine*, between love and casual affairs. Their politics are muddled. They think socialism has something to do with cocktail parties and progressive groups are old fashioned. Their reading of the papers does not go further than the head-lines and they refuse to read Karl Marx because they think he is like the rest of the Marx Brothers.

They are poor in intellect and yet they walk over the face of the city like centuries-foretold messiahs with a



halo twinkling round their diamond shirt-studs and their only message to humanity is that their shirts come from Sulka. In the sweltering heat they perspire. Their bodies they anoint with French perfumes...a queer combination of odours. They are like walking barber shops...perpetually smelling. They would use caviar on their hair because it is expensive, they would shampoo their heads with champagne. They are not sportsmen. Their conception of sport is a weekly visit to the races. They play bad bridge at high stakes. They have no card sense. They do not call a spade a spade, nor open with a pair of queens.

They scorn publicists, yet they pay for publicity, their biographies are sponsored by themselves. Their one passion in life is to preserve themselves in oils, even as Bismark herrings keep in vinegar. They have had their head and backbone removed. They are rich, yet they do not stoop to unscrupulous devices. They try to do railway companies in the eye and to smuggle goods through the Customs. The hallmark of their respectability varies with their bank balances. They are some of them titled people. It is the only thing they have not minded paying for. Their respect for their wealth is second only to their respect for God. Their prayers they write on dividend warrants.

In the evenings they sit and gloat over chota-pegs. They dislike swizzles because they remove the gas. At night they roll up in little cliques. On the floor they bob up and down. They dance out of time. Their rhythm is truly atrocious. They count the beats—one, two and three. They murder the whole theory of jazz. They dislike negro bands. They don't under-

stand them. They wait for the day when this city will be flooded with English players. Lordie! Lordie! Ain't that just too bad? Proudly they sit at their tables. Facing them a mountain of sandwiches, Knickerbocker Glories and potato chips, hot dogs and strawberry jam. Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!

They dislike the unorthodox. Blue shirts they never can bear. They knudge each other in public and dig their elbows at home. They live on gossip and thrive on scandal. Their dirty linen they wash with care. They smile at your faces. They stab from the back. Behind them follows the trail of hypocrisy. They breed dogs and in their spare time they bring up their children. They tame rats and milk cows. They keep the home fires burning. They can't cook but stew in their own juice. They call it domestic economy.

At Juhu on Sundays they prostrate their ugly limbs. They bathe in the sand, they bask in the sun. They wear goggles to keep off the glare. They oil their skins to catch the tan. They scrub their backs for dirt. Pimples grow on them.

Nature leaves them cold. They much prefer Laurel and Hardy. All the sunsets of Turner have for them no meaning. The smile of the Mona Lisa they think they can get for the asking. And of Peter they have never heard. Their excursions into literature do not go further than Maurice Dekobra. They believe that Lawrence of Arabia had something to do with "Sons and Lovers", that Shaw was really Shakespeare and that Hamlet should have had a better ending.

They go to concerts and listen to Schubert. The symphonies of Beethoven they attribute to Wagner. The music of Bach they think is for tuning. They dislike the ballet because of the jumping. They have never heard of Massine and Markova. They only know the Man on the Flying Trapeze. Their theory of life is unsound. Their conception of charity mean. Their superciliousness makes poverty immoral. They neither live nor let live. They are mere phantoms—gaudy phantoms—expensive illusions. They die natural deaths. In the land of the living they are mere tourists.

Nothing ever happens to them. Like the Tower of Pisa they continue to lean—always on the verge of destruction, though only on the verge. The trouble about our Society is that it gets nowhere. Here today and gone tomorrow. No memories are left behind.

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Think now of London, Paris, and old Vienna. Cities of the West. Cities of refuge. Think of the Cote d'Azur, the South of France, Deauville. Think of the Pyrennees and the Dalmatian coast, of the Swiss mountains covered with snow, of the blue Mediterranean and summer skies. Each have their society. Each have their coterie of smart people. But they are living people; people we touch and feel and find human. There is something in their mode of living that ever calls us to them. But here in Bombay city, for all its environment, for all its setting, for all its Anglicised Orientalism, it leaves us cold.

They are a community perpetually bickering, living in glass houses shooting peanuts at each other. There is no purpose in their banal existence. They only float on the stream and are carried hither and thither on the

tide. Public opinion is one of their gods. They worship it, always afraid of what people will say.

Some day, perhaps, the gods will be kind. Some day out of this dishevelled society may emerge a new people—iconoclasts, breaking down the barriers, living life more fully. To that day we dedicate ourselves.

—*Sunday Standard.*

*(There is only one confession I have to make. I have never seen the Tower of Pisa.)*

20/30

## I DINED AT THE TAJ

January 1937.

*(I wrote this article for Norman Hamilton of the Sunday Standard just before I sailed for England that same month. I was told months later that the waiters of the Taj held a protest meeting and that a deputation went to Leni Faletti, the Controller of the Taj. Under the circumstances, its inclusion appears more than justified!)*

**Y**OU have heard of the Ritz in London. You have heard of the Mayfair, the Berkley, and Dorchester House. You have heard of the Savoy. All way down West. You have heard of Shepherd's at Cairo. And you have heard of the Taj. Way down East.

Dark grey stones, rough-edged, massive. Mogul-esque in appearance, facing the harbour, that gorgeous entrance to the East. Ships pass in the middle of the night. Gentle sighs are heard. Maybe lovers have parted. Yet the water ripples—dark blue water—warm bosom of the Indian Ocean, silver-streaked, for it is moonlight and the stars are out. Little lights twinkle. I wonder what they mean.

Inside, air-conditioned, modern and sophisticated, pale green. There are shadows on the wall. Bright lights. Clouds of smoke. There is music in the air. Now soft, slow, languid; now harsh grating syncopation. Hot jazz and lazy rhythm. Swing it, sister, swing it.

There he stands. Leon Abbey in the flesh. Leon Abbey from the Ambassador in Paris. Leon Abbey who used to drive down the *Bois* in his silver Issota. Leon Abbey!

At the piano Dizzy fiddles with the keys. Dizzy of the *chez Florence*. Nothing worries him. Legs crossed—now left, now right, he tinkles away. Sleepy head. Dizzy, ditty rhythm.

The saxophone bellows and from the muted trumpet come the blues. Then the banjo announces the big chief De Sota. The biggest after Bimbo and straight from Broadway. Big Chief De Sota! The Lullaby of Broadway! No wonder Manhattan babies sleep at dawn.

Ah! *Voilà monsieur*. I recognize the *maître d'hôtel*. Sibilia, they call him. Hair brushed carefully, moustache well-groomed, spotlessly-clean shirt, immaculate attire, affable, always polite, so tactful. He knows how to separate chinchilla from cat's fur, jewellery from junk, the girl friend from the bit of fluff. Always ready with a smile as if prosperity was really just around the corner.

I am shown to my table. Not far from me two young people sit. She is beautiful, so believing. He is strong, manly. Tarzan of the Apes. Johnnie Weismuller. On the dance floor they glide. They look into each other's eyes. So warm. So romantic. Cheek to cheek? Grazing his smooth-shaven chin against the plaster on her face. Lovers, maybe. One day. Who knows?

Others too are dancing. A mountain of jelly bounces up and down encircling in his arms two hundred



pounds of femininity he calls his wife. They too were once in love. So long ago. Now eyes have lost their spark, cheeks have sagged and her body has swollen. Age and wrinkles have made incursions into her flesh.

I see these women around me; they are amusing. Dressed gaudily, plainly, some even beautifully. Schiaparelli, Patou, Molyneux, even Govind *durzee*. Long skirts, short skirts, tight skirts, full skirts. Skirts are so essential. Diamante, knick-knacks, art flowers, rosettes, stuck on the necks, pinned all over the shoulders. Hair permed, hair waved, peroxide or platinum. I like them best with hair washed.

Men too have their fashions. The coats of Scholte, trousers by Anderson and Shepherd. What did Michael Arlen say? Yet they come in; man after man, civil and military, dressed in evening clothes, hot and bothered, perspiring. Only sailors don't care.

Around me waiters flit like busy bees. For the energy they exert they achieve nothing. They speak English, but do not understand it when spoken. They fetch prairie oysters when pernod is ordered. They come from Goa and look it. With their unmanly presence, their nasal twang, their Portuguese lingo, they irritate me. They have so much to learn, they might just as well start all over again.

I see battalions of little women, storm troops of 'pooty' girls. Free, white, twenty-one. She is with her brother and his wife. One of the two million surplus women in search for a husband. Indian Army, Civil Service or what have you? Out East to get married. They all do. How different it seems to her from that little cottage in Bedfordshire, Somerset or

Devon. Now she has come to taste the fruit of that forbidden tree. Holy matrimony! Holy Moses and Holy Smoke! With a sprinkling of holy water. Tomorrow *ayahs* will *salaam* her. Tomorrow she will be hailed *memsahib*. Poor kid. Do you blame her?

In one corner is Oxford and Cambridge—too, too scrumptious for words. Brain, brawn and beauty. What ho! Benvolio and the Mills Brothers. Shakespeare and the Boswell Sisters.

In the distance a little figure stands. Spectacled. Five feet two. Framroze—known all over the world from Apollo Bunder to Colaba. Perfect manager, perfect host. Meek, gentle Framroze. Yet I have seen him stand before burlier men and tell tough guys to scram and threaten to sock champs on the jaw.

So runs the Taj, this mighty hotel, caravanseraï of the East. There it stands casting its spacious shadow across the Bunder of Apollo, across the seas, far, far away. At night travellers lay down their weary heads to rest on the soft pillows. Travellers aren't we all? Dingies stand by to ferry them even as Charron did across the Styx and the Acheron, one knows not why or where or whither.

The shades of night are falling fast and the shadows of the evening steal across the sky. So I leave this Babylon of the East, still alone, still conscious of the atmosphere, the little people, the men, the women of my time. Outside, the world is not so warm; outside, it is only moist and sticky; outside, the realization—homeless loiterers of the night, beggar women with half-eaten breasts, poverty on the pavements. It makes me shudder. I feel ashamed that this civilization

of mine with its revelry and its perpetual celebration, its riches and its power should drown the plaintive moaning of those to whom we have denied the right to live.

—*Sunday Standard*

## THE CORONATION OF GEORGE VI

*(This article was written by me as the Sunday Standard's London Correspondent. It was originally headed "A Sight Never To Be Forgotten".)*

ON Coronation Eve in London the streets were wet. There had been rain and fog and the weather prophets had forecast a dismal day. Slowly through the streets in the main thoroughfares, cars were crawling, ticking over gently, side by side, with sight-seers packed like sardines. Some people stood on mudguards and those who felt cold ventured to sit on the bonnets. Rain or no rain, they were determined to paint the town red, white and blue.

Next morning the dark clouds lifted and those who had stayed up all night along the six-mile route viewed with sleepy eyes a comparatively clear sky. It was the reward of their vigil.

I had never seen such perseverance before. Two-deep, three-deep, four and five-deep, they filled every inch of ground from which there was the slightest hope of catching a glimpse of the procession. All night the tubes were pouring into the Coronation area hundreds of thousands of people...Ticket holders who spent anything upto twenty guineas for their seat; others too who could not afford that luxury came by the thousands,

knowing that somehow, from somewhere, they would see something of this pageant such as can be seen only once in a lifetime. Tired and exhausted after hours of waiting, this great mass of humanity awoke from its casual slumber and the cordon of people began to thicken with the first rays of daylight. They ate sandwiches and drank coffee and were fresh again to resume their rejoicing.

I sit facing Buckingham Palace. Time passes quickly and by nine o'clock every seat is taken in the stands round the Palace and down the Mall. Late comers are scrambling for positions. I had walked into mine in comparative comfort, invoking the name of the press. Then a murmur ran through the vast crowd. The Prime Ministers come out of the Palace in their carriages with Stanley Baldwin heading the procession. Mackenzie King, Lyons, Savage and Hertzog follow him. Then come the representatives of India, Burma and Colonial rulers with their personal escorts. There is a faint cheer as they pass. Everyone is so tired, dead tired. The carriages continue to pass. Some are empty, others have notabilities in them who wave and smile. I really don't know what is happening. Everything is impressive; if only I could keep my eyes open.

I see soldiers—heaps of them. Soldiers in uniforms, soldiers in "costumes", Aussies, Mounties, Bengal Lancers and grown-up scouts from South Africa. They sit on horseback and brandish swords. Scarlet, gold, black, blue and more gold. All this colour massed together against the cold grey stone of the Palace as the canvas on which the picture is painted.

Then comes the Royal procession. A woman sitting behind me insists, every time a carriage passes, that Queen Mary is in it. Six times or more Queen Mary must have passed, although her coach went straight to the Abbey from Marlborough House. It is said so in the official programme, but the dear lady sitting behind me still insists Queen Mary passed by. Then she tells her grand-daughter how well she remembers Queen Victoria in procession. As she speaks the years come back to her. She remembers herself in her thirties, then in her twenties—even in her childhood. Yet this glorious pageantry and ceremonial is still as beautiful to her as ever. England never changes. Tradition has at last found its resting place here. It is touching to hear her talk. It makes me feel a stranger in these parts; a modern in a classic assembly; a visitor from overseas. More soldiers pass and more horses. From both gates at either end of the palace they come and pass round the statue of Queen Victoria before proceeding to the Mall. At last comes the Royal coach with the King and Queen.

Clad in white and bareheaded they acknowledge the greetings of the crowd. But the fire I had expected from the people is lacking. The play has only just begun and the curtain has fallen on the first act. The spectators are not yet warmed up for the sun is only just beginning to appear over the roof-tops.

Two things, however, gripped me in this first scene. One was the countenance of Queen Victoria, who in cold marble watched her great-grandson pass beneath her on his way to be crowned King of England even as she had once been crowned Queen. That perfect peace with



which she sits on her marble throne and faces the Mall is touching in its simplicity. The other little detail I shall never forget was the perfect lighting in which the King made his first appearance on the stage of the Coronation theatre. All morning it had been dull and the sun had not ventured out. But at the very moment when the gilded coach emerged from the Palace, the clouds parted and the first rays of a new reign broke through. I looked up and wondered whether this happy omen would fulfil its prophecy. Is this to be the dawn of a new era?

So they all passed. The soldiers, the sailors, the whole procession, all towards the Abbey. I came away to snatch some sleep and food. But sleep was impossible for back home I switched on the wireless. The service from the Abbey was being relayed. First the pompous tone of the announcer, then such bits of service as could be broadcast. The mood changes and this ancient ceremonial which I had been watching grows into an emotional drama with the music of Handel playing softly in the background. Then the voice of the choir and the solemn words with which the Archbishop of Canterbury presents the King to his people, turning East, West, North and South. Then the oath; its tremendous power; its significance; its gravity. The dedication of his life to his country and his people.

The new King stands on the threshold of his new life. George VI is crowned King of England with all the pomp and majesty that befits the coronation of a King. I rush back to the palace because the service in the Abbey has stimulated me. Past the same crowds

I hurry to see the procession on its return. I do not go to my seat among the "chosen people" but stand with the rank and file. I realize then what the monarchy means to the ordinary man and the reverence in which he holds this institution, which has been uprooted in other capitals of Europe. The last scene is about to be played and in a moment the procession will appear on Constitution Hill.

As the curtain goes up the rain begins to fall. Scarlet uniforms are hidden behind dark grey coats and all colour is at one stroke wiped off the scene. The guard outside the palace matches with the grey stone. At three-fifteen the sound of distant cheering announces the first line of the returning procession. Out of the mist and the rain little figures appear and I stand breathless as I see these specks develop into men and horses. Their swords, helmets and bayonets glitter even through this veil of mystery. The sound of military bands and bagpipes, the beat of drums and the rhythm of marching feet, mingled with the growing cheers of the awakened people, creates a symphony which those who have heard will never forget.

Line by line the army, navy and air force come into sight. Contingents from the Colonies and the Dominions and picturesque representatives from India madden the excited crowd. Their cheers grow as the rain pours harder and harder. The Prime Ministers return and Mr. Baldwin bows humbly from his carriage. Nothing could be more gratifying to him on the eve of retirement than to see the people of England cheering him to the echo in return for that unfailing devotion with which he has discharged the great office of State

with which they entrusted him. (*This sentence was written in 1937. I wonder what they would do to Mr. Baldwin now*).

Princes and princesses pass. Then Her Majesty Queen Mary with two little princesses, Elizabeth and Margaret Rose, get a tremendous ovation from the crowd. Again and again they cheer the Queen Mother, and then with one final burst of cheering such as I have never heard the people welcomed their newly-crowned King and Queen. No man could remain untouched by this expression of love, homage and reverence and the spontaneous outburst of affection which the people of England showed for their Sovereign Lord the King.

—*Sunday Standard.*

## PREPARE, MY SON, FOR WAR.

May, 1938.

I had hoped to be able to write this first article for the *Sunday Chronicle* in a more pleasant vein. I would have liked it to be about life and beauty and the joy of living. I would have liked it too if I could have believed in life instead of being as I am now, horrified at the grim prospect of death which faces the world and its civilisation today.

This is not a book review but I cannot help mentioning that the cause of my despondency is a book I have just laid down. It is the most sad book I have read for a long time. It is the story of Europe that is heading for a crash. It is the story of man who has worked out his own destruction. It is called *Insanity Fair* and its author is Douglas Reed. And as I turned over its last page I could hear the voice of the author saying to the younger generation: Prepare, my son, for war.

I respect, that warning. It comes from a source that is reliable and trust-worthy. It comes from a man who has spent the greater part of his life watching closely the European cavalcade and who has reported it for so many years for the *London Times*.

Smugly complacent, eight thousand miles away from the scene of the last war, we sit turning over the pages of our morning paper to read how Hitler mar-

ched into Austria to fulfil an ambition of his life and to make a speech to his motherland—for he is a Viennese—with a tear in his eye. *'Ein Volk, ein Reich'* he says as he did at Memel, in the Saar at Tannenberg, at Micklemberg. One people one Reich—his dream of a pan-Germanic Empire, for which he has sacrificed the lives of his erstwhile friends, the happiness of hundreds of thousands who live in the shadow of the concentration camp, the birthright of the German Jews, the independence of Austria, the peace of Europe.

What difference does it make to us here whether in Vienna there is an Austrian Government or a German one? Do we even today know the difference between an Austrian and a German? To us who still think of nationalities in terms of the last war, when France was an ally and Germany was not, Austria was just a little part of the German Empire that met its doom in the November of 1918. To us Austria is synonymous with Germany. To us, who cannot appreciate the importance of the frontiers, the fall of Austria into German hands is of little significance.

Not so in Europe. Not so on that continent where millions of pounds, francs and marks are being spent in that mad race of armaments. Not so in Czechoslovakia which pushed its troops up to the frontier to make sure that Hitler was not coming into its territory to make another speech which read: *"Ein Volk ein Reich"*. And it was in that vicinity that on the pretext of the murder of the Archduke, Franz Ferdinand, at Sarajevo, a whole world took up arms. We fought that time for "King and Country". We fought for democracy and to bring a lasting peace to this world of ours and to save civilisation from utter destruction.

We will be fighting the next war with the same slogans. Yet to think that eight million of the flower of manhood that lie cold on the battlefields of Europe and to whom in every nook and corner of the world we have erected monuments, have died in vain.

Let us, therefore, go back a few years and trace the real causes of this next war and see whether even now, we who are at the moment concentrating so much on our nationalism, cannot pause a moment to think of civilisation as a whole. We who have the greatest disciple of Ahimsa in our midst in the person of the Mahatma, cannot we do something to prevent this flagrant breach of the most elementary rights of man? Mahatmaji, you are living at this hour! Your genius still dominates over our destiny, but there are others— young men like me in France and England and Germany and Italy and Central Europe and Russia. It is for them that I plead. Cannot anything be done to stop this generation from being wiped out even as their fathers were only twenty years ago? I ask you this question, Bapuji, because you may with your genius find me an answer. We young men who live in your shadow have developed something of that flaming desire for truth which you have translated into real life as *Satyagraha*.

But to go back to the causes. I accuse Britain chiefly because of the blunders she has made. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said the other day that the present Government in Great Britain is the most incompetent they have ever had in the last hundred and fifty years. They do not even know how to preserve themselves. But it is more than mere incompetency. It was elected



on a lie. It swore to the British public, to the workers and the poor who are at heart very charming people, that its mission was humanitarian, for it wanted to enforce sanctions against the aggressor, Italy, when it knew full well that there was never any such intention and already at Stressa in 1935, a year before the Italian annexation of Abyssinia, England and France knew of Italy's intentions and had obviously acquiesced. Otherwise what was Mr. Thompson, the expert on Abyssinia, doing at this Stressa Conference?

How well I remember Litvinoff on the occasion of that fiasco meeting of the league at Geneva where the representatives had met to condemn the German walk-out of the League and resolve piously "to devise measures against the future unilateral acts likely to endanger European peace". Litvinoff then said: "European peace! Why only European? Why not other continents?" And Litvinoff obviously was aware of the significance of Thompson's presence at that League meeting. And up bobbed Sir John Simon, a very angered gentleman, because as he put it: "Let us face the facts. Let us address ourselves to the practical problems in a practical spirit." And when the next war comes you must remember this hypocrisy of the British Foreign Minister at that time. For that was the real cause and germ of the war that is to come. Yes, the hypocrisy of the British Government at that time.

Events followed to justify that Litvinoff was not so unpractical after all. Italy marched into Abyssinia, and while England was openly clamouring for sanctions against Italy, Sir Samuel Hoare, who succeeded Simon

at the Foreign Office, was bartering with France to give the chief burglar the whole booty. Let us face the facts! Let us, who have heard so much about the glorious British tradition, say once and for all what we really think of it. Let us think twice before we say that the next war will be a war for democracy.

Then trouble started. Italy made friends with Germany and bartered its friendship for a free hand in Austria. Hitler had made one great ally. England was the cause of cementing that friendship. Then came Spain, and Hitler and Mussolini knew what to do in Spain. England did nothing. Unilateral action, my foot. I burn when I hear this waste of big words by English statesmen at Geneva.

And now we have come to Czechoslovakia, Hitler's next port of call. This megalomaniac will not stop for the symbol of Germany has been the eagle and never the lamb. And when I read Lord Halifax's speech in the House of Lords and hear him say there is no danger of war, I genuinely wonder what has become of this one-time Christian Viceroy who always spoke the truth, whatever else he may have done. Or is it that the Foreign Secretary really believes what Hitler told him at that hunting party in his chalet in Bavaria? It couldn't be.

Therefore, I say let us get this straight once and for all, whether you and I are Indians or Englishmen here in India. Let us at least, so far removed from the scene of the bloodshed that is soon to come, realize that Hitler means "*Ein Volk, ein Reich*" and when he says he doesn't care a hoot what England thinks about


it. He has to make the promise he made to his Aryan Germans. Nazi Germany stands today for war as it stood in 1914, and whether you send Halifax or Eden or Samuel Hoare, the plans of Hitler will not change one jot.

We have here in our midst a great many Germans. I do not refer to Jewish emigrants, but to those who are responsible for the German terror. You can see them drinking Munich beer and Patsenhoffer in their clubs in India. You see the advertisements of their firms in some of the evening papers. We use their goods. We trade on a large scale with Germany. We pay indirectly for the cannon-fodder of the next war. Let us realise that. Let us visualize too the line up of the parties in this next slaughter. Let us forget once and for all that Russia's sole aim is to bring about a revolution everywhere. Let us forget the days when we used to refer contemptuously to Soviet Russia as "Bolshie". Let us realize that our soldiers will be saying 'Nitchivo' to them while fighting side by side in the next war. Let us stop wasting our time trying to protect ourselves from "Bolshevik propaganda". There has never been a Soviet revolution transplanted anywhere else. And the revolution in Spain was emphatically Fascist. Remember that. Remember too that it was not the Communists who fired the Reichstag; not one self respecting sensible man has said so. Not one of the hundreds of correspondents who attended the trial! Let us face the facts.

—*The Bombay Chronicle.*

## IF WE ONLY CARED

*July, 1938.*

“ ONE half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives”; so people said, but I didn't believe it. Nobody would until they saw the two halves—the quarters, the eights, the various fragments into which society divides itself. Last year in London I happened to run into a strange assortment of people. I saw the vivid contrast which they presented. I realised then how little they knew about each other.

In his Park Lane apartment I once dined with a prosperous man-in-the-city. His yearly income was nobody's business, though some wild guesses may have hit the mark. He himself was not sure. Nor did he really care. He had a black Rolls and a liveried chauffeur. He owned a mansion house in the country with several acres of ground to separate him from the red-brick houses that had been built around him. He was married. Had two children. But over it all the blinds were drawn and no one outside could peep through the dark plush curtains.

Outside in the street—it was still Park Lane—a tramp was digging into the dustbin in order to collect his meal—a piece of chateaubriand which was “overdone”, a little bit of lobster stuck in its shell and still tasting of Sauce Newberg and a cigar which had only been half-smoked.

He washed it all down with a half pint of ale from the nearest pub. It was all in Mayfair, that chic quartier of London, though you wouldn't believe it. My host in the flat above had not bothered to look out of his large glass window. It was too cold outside, he had said. And the tramp looked up but didn't believe anyone lived in any house round there. No one could afford to, he said. It's not what it used to be, was his final verdict. Both were happy in their own ways. The one did not know or care about the existence of the other. Yet they were the two halves of the same economic system, backbones of the same nation, two soldiers in the war for the liberation of humanity, two men.

The next eye-opener for me was an artist's studio in Chelsea. I pulled up along a row of dirty-looking houses, each just as dirty as the other, with unpolished numberplates as the only mark of distinction. At number 48, the bell had ceased to function. I rapped on the door. It was opened. Groping through the dark passage I found my way to the studio. The maestro received me. He was a relic of the days when art was art, untouched by this gale of materialism that had swept over the artists of the world. Today art is often meaningless unless it can be used to advertise Carter's Liver Pills or Jeyes' Fluid. Art is just stinking with it.

The maestro with his French beard, his flowing white hair, his black cravat and coarse dark-blue overall, such as you see on porters at the quai at Marseilles came up from his underground studio. I never believed there were still people who lived that way. For his

studio was a dump where the most obvious junk claimed pride of place over objects of art. Nothing had any price. Art never has a price until circumstances conspire to fix it.

He looked at me and with a sigh said that with the encroachments society had made into the quartier artistique, the genuine artists were being driven lower and lower into the bowels of the earth. It was a case of the strong pushing out the weak. And so he lived, like they all lived; like worms afraid of coming to the surface for fear of being trod upon.

As the maestro was busy boiling water for tea and unwrapping a parcel of cakes, I wandered round his studio. Dust had spread itself in layers on everything I saw and touched. Exotic looking women looked down at me and the smell of fresh paint emanated from their nude bodies. An empty box of Corona cigars paid a silent tribute to the good old days—days of prosperity. Prosperity was now a thing of the past, just a souvenir he proudly cherished. On the mantelpiece was a well-thumbed edition of "Art—Then and Now". After that there was little else to say. That little volume had summed it up so beautifully. It contained in that sentence the whole life-story of that man—the tragedy of the real artist.

Artists!—artists aren't they all? I remember being introduced to an obnoxious young man who claimed the distinction of being an artist. It shook me for he was fat and greasy and his hair was carefully oiled and parted. He was only a dance-band leader and in spite of the "ski" which was suffixed to his name he was only a Londoner from the East End. He was an artist he



said and he pushed into my hands a complimentary ticket to go and hear him and his fellow artists at the Camden Town Astoria—or was it the Tooting Palace or the Lewisham Empire? I went.

This museum of art was one of those superstructures of chromium and plush which masqueraded as modern architecture. From the third row of the stalls I saw mine host make this stately entry in a pink satin Hungarian shirt with trousers of a darker shade. He almost danced his way to the stage amid the thundering applause of the patrons of Camden Town. He bowed low, as they used to in the days of the Czar. Then with a swing of the baton he collected his great orchestra to strike the opening bar of a melody which had reached the barrel-organ stage and had bounced back into the music halls to be interpreted differently by "artists". Then I knew that one half of the artists of the world didn't know what the other half did.

But nearer home—just across from the window of my own apartment—was to be found the truth of this dictum. One night I returned to my apartment carrying a bundle of books. It was late and I had not switched on my lights and as I stood at the open window I saw the lights in two adjacent rooms in the house across the street. The curtains were not drawn but the lights were dim and I could see figures moving in both. They were the figures of two women—two different women in the different rooms, who probably knew nothing of each other, though they lived in adjacent apartments.

The picture is still vivid in my mind. That of a young woman pouring out a glass of drink, and then gulping it, holding her head in her hands, swaying across

the room—drunk, dead drunk. She was scantily clad and didn't care what the world thought of her or said. Something within her was dead. And she was trying to numb her senses. The drink was intended to provide an anaesthetic to deaden her feeling.

The other window was also open. It revealed a room that was more tidy and a woman who had a hold on herself and her life. She was turning in and in the faint light I could not make out how old she was. Nor did it matter. She had finished the last touches of her toilet and carefully applied cream on her face and hands. From a table beside her bed she picked up a picture and kissed it. She pressed it to her eyes and kissed it again. Then she knelt by her bed, made the sign of the Cross on her little body, bowed her head for a few moments, made another Cross, got up and turned off the light.

Two women living in adjacent rooms; they might just as well have lived in two different worlds. I felt like smashing their window glass in the hope that they might look out and probably meet each other. Yet all I did was to switch off my own light and go to bed.

Today we live our lives our own way. Nobody knows. Nobody cares. Nobody wants to know. Perhaps it's a case of individual freedom bought at too high a price, for if one half of the world knew how the other half lived, it would probably begin to care. Humanity could do so much for itself—if only to relieve the pain, the anguish, the suffering of those who cry out, but who are never heard.

Our windows are for ever shut, our blinds are always drawn.

—*Bombay Chronicle.*

## THE PARSEES

*September, 1938.*

THE bulk of Parsee self-glorifying literature that appears in the Press on the occasion of the Parsee New Year has already appeared. I have read the literary efforts of those who are called upon to perform honorarily and honourably just this once a year. I have read through their eulogies of the glorious but dead past. I have read with some misgiving their assurances of the future. Says one dear lady, talking about the "resplendent light of the New Year": "It comes floating upon me wrapped in the golden haze of Hope, bearing upon its crimson wings, our ideals and aspirations, our dreams of a better and more stable Zoroastrian future."

All that I have read, and more. I have read the messages of those whose articles take as much space as their pictures—empty, meaningless tautology rushed to press at the eleventh hour because they were too busy in the normal conduct of their lives to devote any time to the writing of New Year messages and articles. Better that the cobbler should stick to his last and that a few journalists should have been hired to do the job than that we should have the literary efforts of motor and mill magnates, ophthalmic surgeons, scout-masters and obscure professors.

There is an air of self-sufficiency and of smug complacency about this form of amateur journalism that stinks in my nostrils. If press censorship should ever have functioned, it should have functioned now. An innocent reader may get the impression that here we are—the Parsees of India—moving on from greatness to greatness with high ideals, high purpose and a pureness of mind that can challenge the onslaught of the evil of this world. No one among these many writers has looked upon the progress of the Parsees other than in terms of prosperity. What an ideal to have for a community!

I know that we, Parsees, have rather an interesting past. The standard work on the Parsees after all emanates from my family by a distinguished ancestor of mine, whose name I bear. It makes bright and courageous reading. It shows how once from a beaten and decadent nation which could not resist the Arab invasion, a handful of men, who felt they were staunch guardians of the message of a great prophet, escaped from the shores of Persia rather than acquiesce in the religious dictation of their invaders. It shows, too, how they settled down in India by the courtesy of the Hindus who were more tolerant, how they maintained the religious independence which they had fought for, and how in commerce and industry the descendants of those refugees from Persia played a pioneering part. All that naturally makes interesting reading, and for the generation for which my great-grandfather wrote it was almost stimulating. No one has disputed that we the Parsees have had a glorious past and that among our ancestors have been Rustom and Sohrab and the rest. But so what? The Greeks, the Romans, the

Chinese can boast of a far greater past. Yet Greece today is an unimportant part of Europe. Rome is almost unrecognizable and the Chinese have even been laundrymen.

What is more important is the present and the immediate future. It is with a certain regret that I look upon this somewhat indifferent state of our community that wanders from prosperity to depression, up and down with trade cycles and entirely dependent upon them. Our vision of life is limited by a material horizon. We constantly wish each other prosperity and nothing more. That is the note we strike in the chequered history of India and that is, perhaps, what is to be deplored in the age in which we live.

The time has come when this world has little use for fragmentary communities which try to live in splendid isolation. A hundred thousand is an insignificant number in the three hundred and seventy millions that make up the population of India and in the larger figure which constitutes the peoples of this world. We must always remember that. We must always recognize our relativity to the rest of this world.

I have often been asked whether or not I am proud of being a Parsee. Nationality now-a-days is a very dangerous thing to be proud of, the wars in Europe and the rest of the world can be traced to this national arrogance. The wars that loom over the European horizon will come out of that. Hitler's move for colonial expansion is an example of national arrogance carried too far. Britain's foreign policy is national arrogance on the defence. Even so they have greater numbers. We have nothing to protect us except our



bank balances. And I fail to see how a feeling of national pride can ever emanate out of a fluctuating bank balance. That's why I don't think in terms of being proud or ashamed of being a Parsee. I accept it as a fact—a detail, necessary only to passport regulations. I feel a fond affection towards those who are like me, descended from the refugees of Persia. And fond affection is the only sort of feeling one should have for one's community.

But I owe a greater allegiance to the other things in life. I feel for the poor and the oppressed of this world. I feel for the coloured men who have suffered. I feel for the humiliated. I feel for those who are able-bodied and cannot find the opportunity to work. I feel for the genuinely unfortunate. I feel for those who are struggling for the liberation of humanity and who, in this very country which has adopted us as its own, are putting up a brave fight for political freedom, for the right to govern oneself and for self-respect. If I was living in China to-day I would feel the same for the Chinese people. If I was in the Spain of the people, my allegiance would be for them. That is what I find so desperately wrong about my community—their complete travesty of facts, their utter disregard of present-day conditions, this living in a dead past, this smug-complacency, this unnecessary racial pride, this over-emphasis on preserving our stock from mixed breeding, this closing of one eye to the fact that we are a very small community.

That is our present state, however much you may talk about "the rosy dawn" and the "resplendent light".

What about the future? We have multiplied with strenuous in breeding from a few hundreds to a hundred



thousand. What you see to-day walking on two legs and calling himself or herself a Parsee is the result of permutation and combination from those original few hundreds. All possible strains must be exhausted now. There have been some very promising men who have emanated from our community. There are some living even now. Much better that names be not used. But there is a growing number of weaker and weaker Parsees. They will breed and breed and breed inferior kind. As they deteriorate they will talk more about their past and less and less about their present and future. They know they have no present and no future. They might make a few thousand rupees one day at the stock exchange or at the races or in a profitable commercial transaction. But money beyond a certain point is superfluous and you cannot leave your mark in this world only by being a very rich man. That is no contribution to the progress of this world and even charity is a vague sort of monument you can erect to your own memory. The men who will live to-morrow and the day after and the days to come will be the men who have achieved something and who have contributed in thought to the generation to which they belonged—thought which has passed down the generations adding to the gathered wisdom of the ages. That is what I would like to see emanating from my little community.

I would like to see your great philanthropists make it possible for our young men to educate themselves and grow up away from family inhibitions and interferences; away from the taboos of the older and decrepit generation. I would like to see one of our rich Parsee gentleman donate enough money to build an *Ashridge* for the young Parsee boys who have no

idea of the conditions of this world and who cannot study by themselves at home. I would like to see greater possibilities for our young men to get cultural instead of vocational training. I would like to see them beginning to think in terms of India and the world instead of their sports cars and their tennis matches, their little jobs and their *bakshish* at Patetis. Much better that charity should first care for the young and the promising than that it should go to preserve the decrepit, the old and the infirm. I say this with sorrow in my heart; for I feel for the old and the infirm, yet their claims should wait when the youth of the community is so lacking in opportunity.

—*Bombay Chronicle.*

## IS THIS THE WILL OF GOD?

**Y**OU have seen in your midst a number of Jews who have wandered a long way from their home. You have wondered why they have come so far. Have they no homes of their own? Have they no friends or relations in whose midst they want to live? Have they no country? Scattered over the face of this world, their family ties shattered, their homes broken, their faces branded, they humbly seek refuge where kinder people will have them.

I am glad that my country has offered them some shelter. I like to see my countrymen extend to these refugees, fleeing from a terror that we would hardly associate with contemporary civilization, the ordinary courtesies of human kindness. I like to feel that in this tragic hour of the Semite people, we the thoroughbred Aryans of this world, have not shown that contemptible arrogance of race or cast or creed, such as has been shown to the Jews elsewhere in this world.

The story of the Jews is a sad story. We have been of late too busy with our own troubles to bother about the sufferings of humanity at large. We have little idea of this exodus of Jews from their homes and their fatherland into the wilderness that always seems to be theirs. A tragic race, a tragic people. Without a home, for no fault of theirs. On the highways of this world you find to-day some of the most cultured

people, whose gathered wisdom might have done something for the peace of man. The great giants of our age are mere hobos with a bundle of shattered dreams hanging heavily on their broken backs.

I have seen the great scientist, Einstein, as a refugee in the precincts of a Gothic cathedral. He was looking sadly at the fountain in the Tom Quad of Christ Church, contemplating not scientific theory, but the dark future that faced him and his people. His contribution to humanity, his services to science and learning, his great research, his eventual conclusions, on which all matter must stand or fall, seem to have been forgotten because of the Semite blood that ran in his veins. How brutal this world can be! The choice that lies before him to-day is one which, I pray may never come to our worst enemies. It is the choice between living as an exile in a foreign land—far away from the land of his fathers, far away from his home and his people, far away from the days of his childhood—and living in the shadow of the concentration camp.

That is the choice that faces a Jew today in those parts of the world where the will of God is interpreted by those who have emerged from obscurity to hold the destiny of a country in the palm of their hands. Politicians have become prophets, and corporals have become gods themselves. That is the sort of madness that dominates the thought and opinion of a large section of civilized society in the age to which we belong.

These morons in uniform are the demi-gods to whom homage is paid. The chosen people of God are

those who have black corpuscles running riot in their Aryan veins. The Semites are merely the tuberculous bacilli. That is the will of God, we are told. That is the will of God which is made to prevail with the help of two million armed men. Death is the sanction by which the law of God is upheld! Unnatural death.

We have heard a lot of things said against the Jew. They have been called "vermin", "bloodsucking spiders", "parasites", "the progeny of filth and fire", "the living specimens of decay", "unclean, uncultured people", "conspiring traitors", "incarnations of all the lust and perversity of this world". But let those who are without sin cast the first stone.

It does not look as if there is any justice in this world. I often doubt whether there is even a God. Justice has never fulfilled itself. It is little consolation to us that in another world awaits the promised reward. Might seems to be right and there is little truth that can be spoken in front of a firing squad. The children of the ghetto have cried at the sight of their perishing fathers. The sons of Zion have been slaughtered at the altar of national socialism. Not in the name of Christianity which seems to have been forgotten but in the name of inhuman brutality which masqueraded as patriotism, have these followers of Moses been pinned to a cross which has its edges bent. They have died not as martyrs, but as vermin crushed by man.

What was the promised land that Moses saw when from Pisgah he beheld the vision which was to bring peace to these wanderers of the world? It couldn't have been the land from which they have now been exiled. It couldn't have been the land in which they

were beaten and spat upon. Moses could never have seen so wrong. He would have noticed those signs which read "Jew keep out". That was never the promised land for his people.

I have lived midst these fleeing refugees. I have known their thoughts, their feelings, their utter resignation to what has been called "the will of God". I have heard them say almost with tears in their eyes: "We are only damned Jews." I have seen them wandering aimlessly over the cities of the West—cities of refuge. I can understand what it must feel like to go hungry and starve even though in their own country they have a fortune to call their own. I have seen some of the nicest women of our generation forced to walk the pavements under the flickering light of a street-lamp, because that was "the will of God". Their bodies, the handiwork of God and nature, have become haggard with the suffering that has been their lot. Many a father has taken his life at the sight of his suffering children. Many an old woman, who had never harmed a mortal soul, has dug her own grave to assure herself of a burial.

That is what is happening to the Jews to-day. You see these poor pitiable emigrants in London and Paris and those other cities of Europe that still retain a spark of Christian charity. No man, however cold-blooded, can look upon a sight, so touching in its poverty, without feeling for these people who have suffered in vain. The benches in the park under the open sky on cold and wintry nights make poor homes for those who once lived like you and I in the ordinary comforts of our own homes.



You see them queuing up in a bread line for a meal that will help to keep body and soul together. They wander back again to their homes under the bare sky, waiting for the will of God to express itself otherwise than it has done. It is a study in infinite patience. It is a story of untold suffering. There is no hope. There is no salvation. The barriers of nationality prevent them from going anywhere or from doing any work whatsoever. That is the worst of being exiled from one's own country. That is the most unjust part of this Jew-baiting which the national fanaticism of blonde Aryans has decreed as part of the reconstruction of their social, political and economic fibre. It is a disgusting way in which to rebuild a nation.

But the Jew will not be exterminated. He has stood the test of time too long to fade away from the picture now. Suffering is the heritage of that race of Semites. It has given them backbone and character and that will to live and to persevere, which has characterised the Jews wherever they are to be found. Conscious of the perpetual uncertainty that has hung like a shadow over their whole life, they have gathered their resources.

Jew will help Jew whatever happens. Already the great banking houses of America and England and France, which are controlled to some extent by Jews, are trying to find ways and means of preventing their countrymen from being exterminated from the face of this earth. You hear of them meeting in some quiet corner of this world, in neutral territory where there are no fanatics whom they should dread and no concentration camps which they should fear. They come from all corners of the world to solve this great problem which faces their community to-day.

There are still democracies and decent-minded people in this world who have made it the first article of their faith to help those who have been the victims of black terror. Ordinary men and women have stood up to denounce this most shameful persecution of an innocent people merely to provide a slogan for ambitious politicians. It is not merely the Jews of other countries that have voiced their protests, but the Christians as well. Even the heathen has cried shame. One does not have to be civilized and sophisticated to know that this brutal drive against the Jews was never part of the original plan of this world.

In some small town in America an old woman got up in a crowded assembly and with her frail voice she told an audience of many thousands how her fathers and forefathers had fought in a war for the liberation of humanity, and that the children of those great fighters for the cause of freedom would never countenance any movement which forgot that great principle of liberty and freedom for which their fathers had fought so gallantly.

That is the spirit in which small-town people have risen to speak for the downtrodden Jews of this world. That is the way in which humble folk have shown their contempt for this the most inhuman of inhumanities.

And so it is also in the small towns of England and France and other such countries where there is still a drop of democracy and freedom left. The ordinary people of this world are too human to pass over this persecution of the Jews. They know that the world has enough tragedy without our burdening it with more. They know what suffering is, because they have

suffered. They are the people who have braved many a storm. They are the people who have gone to war to save their homes from the onslaught of an invader. They are the backbone of all nations. They are the nation itself. They are the people.

Let us also follow that example. As a people we have of late distinguished ourselves as champions of the weak and the oppressed. We have fought for our own liberty and our own freedom. Our national movements stand for the great ideal which Lincoln put so admirably in his Gettysburg speech, when he said that all people were created equal. But let us not interpret this fundamental principle, on which all decent human society should be built, as applicable only to ourselves. Let us help those others who are fighting a grim battle to preserve themselves from complete extermination. Let us who have suffered help those who are suffering now. Suffering is the badge of all our kind.

Someday perhaps the oppressed of this world will look up to a clear sky. Someday they will walk with their heads held high. Someday the Jew will find his home, his people, his country. Someday the voice of God will speak again. Then will the Jew smile once again.

—*Sunday Standard.*

## NUREMBERG

*September, 1938.*

**A**N anxious world waited for September the 12th. It came; it went. The voice of the Fuehrer has roared in the presence of some hundred thousand men who gathered at the annual Nazi rally to hear from the greatest among them of the destiny of Germany—of Europe, of the world. Hitler has spoken.

There has not been since 1918 a time when war has become once more so much of a reality. The civil war in Spain, the conflict in the Far East, the minor skirmishes elsewhere, the "Anschluss", were in their own way great tragedies. There could have been nothing more unfortunate than the conquest of Abyssinia. Even so these were localized affairs. But now we have come to the brink of a real world war. Prague is no longer the capital of Czechoslovakia but the focal point of the peace of the world. It has become the testing ground of the strength of Hitler and his million armed men, his fleet of bombers, his specially prepared poison gas. Likewise it is to be seen whether this united front stretching from Bolsheviks to Democrats and International Democrats will preserve the ideas of peace and democracy from the onslaught of Hitler and the Fascists. To-day, to-morrow, some day the issue will have to be fought out between these two conflicting forces of this world and it seems as if the fates

have chosen Prague for the distinction of being the battlefield of that conflict.

That is the dominant note in Hitler's Nuremberg blustering. Once before he bluffed an unaware world by marching into Austria 'for Austria's sake'. Once before he tore up the Treaty of Versailles even as a predecessor of his had torn up "a scrap of paper". But it seems as if he has tired his hand at bluffing once too often. Or is he really serious?

There was a time when Germany had a just grievance. The victorious Allies had exacted the harshest terms as part of the price that Germany had to pay for the damage it had done. Germany paid till it was bled white. The Allies did little in the face of German demands to reconsider the penalty that has been exacted. The Disarmament Conferences were each of them black marks on the Allies' record. No one country could be found to make the first gesture of volunteering to disarm. Sir John Simon who led the British delegation and expounded Britain's policy at its most critical stage, was not equal to the task that lay before him. His first draft which went to Geneva contained three ridiculous proposals. First, he offered to abolish conscription, when everyone knew that there was no conscription, in England. Second, that all submarines should be destroyed. Everyone knew that if submarines were destroyed, the British Navy would become supreme. And thirdly, he offered to destroy all tanks over 20 tons. An enquiry revealed later that there was in the English artillery only one such tank and that even this was out of order. That was the lamentable farce that England put up in its desire to white-wash the Disarmament Conference.



Aerial bombing England would not give up. It was one of the cardinal points on which the Disarmament Conference broke up. To-day at Nuremberg we hear an echo of that same aerial bombing when Hitler says: "Democracies elsewhere are fooling the people by financial means, yet do not hesitate to bring natives to reason with bombs." And later he adds: "Without asking the opinion of the natives they have subjugated continents." That is Hitler at Nuremberg to-day. That is something Britain will find difficult to answer now.

But all that is past. Enlightened thought has condemned the building of Empires whether British or German. We, who are anxiously waiting to see the dismembering of the British Empire to which we belong and its re-formation into self-governing and autonomous countries, belonging rightfully to their people and existing for their welfare, are not going to see in our age and in our time another Empire grow up in our midst. The idea of Empire stinks and that of a Fascist Empire stinks even more.

That is my first reaction to the claims of Hitler to form or rather to resurrect the German Empire. '*Ein volk, ein Reich*' can have no other meaning. What is going to happen in the next few days will decide whether Hitler is to achieve his dream of a Pan-Germanic union, a ruthless and detestable force in the midst of humanity, cruel and oppressive to those who are not by blood Aryans, disrespectful of the fundamental rights of man—freedom of speech, liberty of thought and expression. The attitude of the Powers, now classed as Bolshevik and democratic, has been strong and firm. France with its foresight,



remembering the days when German troops were a hundred miles from Paris, has said in no uncertain terms that any interference with Czechoslovakia will mean the violation of its sovereign rights which France will resist. Russia has long waited for an opportunity to use the hammer and the sickle to straighten the edges of the swastika. The five-mile broad passage through Rumania will bring Soviet troops sooner to the rescue of Prague than Hitler could have calculated. And in an unofficial way England has announced that if France is in the fray, it will be necessary for England to stand by its old ally. What else could England do after the cordial handshaking between King and (the French) President on the recent memorable occasion in Paris. And England means the Dominions too—perhaps not India because India is not a Dominion and England has hardly behaved well with us. Even so, how will it be possible for us to stay out now that Tokyo has pledged its allegiance to 'the great and honourable forces of Nazism and Fascism'? With Japan in the world fray, the war will be fought as much in the East as in the West. And whatever may be the grievances we have against the British, this much is certain that we would rather postpone our fight for self-government than that hordes of Japanese should defile this country of ours with their ignoble, uncultured, unholy presence. That is why Prague is as important to us as it is to France and England and Russia and the rest of the world.

Our eyes, therefore, must turn at this moment to the focal point of the next war. Prague is to-day that focal point, even as Nuremberg was yesterday and the day before. The only difference is that Nuremberg was a septic focus, and no one knows how far the

infection has spread and what diagnosis can be made from the symptoms that were discovered at Nuremberg.

I do not think that Hitler in his full senses would face that united front of Bolsheviks and Democrats. But when a little corporal on the strength of great promises, which are difficult to keep, has wormed his way to the top and acquired power far beyond his capacity to hold, there is little knowing when the man is and is not in his senses. Forced by his already made promises, forced by the men to whom those promises were made, forced by his pride, his desire to remain at the helm of German affairs—an enviable post for any one man. Hitler may have to march to that violent death that seems to have been written in the palm of his hand. If that should happen, it will not be the loss of this one pure-blooded Aryan dictator that we shall mourn. The Germans of his generation may remember him with fond affection, but the world at large will always think of him as a menace to world peace, even as the Kaiser was in 1914, and Napoleon before him. But it is of the others—the men who will also give their lives—Germans, English, French, Russians—comrades of all men that I am thinking of. They will die for nothing. Their homes will be broken once again even as they were in the four long years of 1914-1918.

Ten million men for the sake of an Archduke at Sarajevo! How many now for an unstatesmanlike speech at Nuremberg? That is the question that is being asked in every home in England to-day. In France and elsewhere. It is as if a plague had broken out and we knew there was to be an annihilation of human lives. The news of that plague has already

been announced at Nuremberg. It is now to be seen whether the gathered wisdom of the ages will come to the rescue of man to stop this civilisation from marching to its doom as it is doing now.

Prepare for the carnage that is to come. Hitler has spoken. And let us remember Nuremberg for that.

—*Bombay Chronicle.*

## WE STOOP TO CONQUER

*September, 1938.*

**I**N the little homes in Europe to-day there will be a sigh of relief. The dawn broke with a ray of sunshine and the dark clouds of the day before, which had gathered over the face of Europe, have passed away without breaking. The threatened storm has at least been postponed, if not averted. Humanity lives once more again. Civilisation has signed for itself another lease of life.

That is what I feel as over the tapes comes the news that the Czechs have accepted the proposals of France and England to cut off a left arm in order to save the rest of the body. It is like a man surrendering himself to surgical advice and to an operation in the hope of having something to live for. The position of Czecho-Slovakia has been much the same. They have in the face of the Anglo-French agreement no other alternative but to acquiesce to "the re-adjustment of the frontiers". Pretty words these, but in short it means that Germany is to have a part of Czecho-Slovakia in return for guaranteeing the remaining portion.

She is the price that this little but important part of Europe is made to pay for the peace of the world. I do not question the wisdom of those who have suggested this only possible solution, of a problem which

has held the world spell-bound for some days. I hail it as a piece of good diplomacy, even of statesmanship, taking into consideration the alternative which was undoubtedly a world war. I am willing to regard Mr. Chamberlain as the saviour and the British and French Cabinets as the heroes of the day. They have at least forgotten that false pride and given way to the demands of a megalomaniac who knew he could get what he asked for. The pity of it is that things should ever have been allowed to get to such a stage. It is always the privilege of statesmen first to create a crisis, and then to avert it? Is it not possible for them to avoid such critical situations in the first place?

That is what will be asked, now that this world has had breathing space to think calmly over the happenings of the last few years. When Germany first asked for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles and for the Powers to consider the cancellation of the war debt, in view of the economic stress that was draining the resources of the country, there was not one Power in Europe that would listen to its call for help. France and England did not care what happened to Germany, knowing as they did that any challenge from Germany could be easily resisted. But the tide turned and out of the Germany of Herr Stressman evolved the Germany of Hitler—a desperate Germany which cared no longer for the moral or the diplomatic code and which was set on rebuilding the national character which had died since the war.

The blame of making that evolution possible must fall on the heads of the English and the French people,

who had between them made the League of Nations as a sort of joint department for the preservation of themselves against other lesser powers. Had the French and the German attitude been different at the time of the most critical discussions at Geneva and the Disarmament Conference, the German people would not have been driven to follow the lead of the new messiah in their midst—the corporal with the little moustache who marched his way to take over the battered Ship of State and to pronounce himself dictator.

These are the facts that now emerge in clearer light than ever before. These are the facts that have now to be faced whether England and France like or not. The worm has turned and the day has come when Mahomed no longer goes to the mountain but waits for the mountain to come to him. To that extent one cannot help acknowledging what Hitler, much as we dislike his anti-Semitism and his ruthless persecution of the Jews, has done for the prestige of a fallen Germany. That the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to whom a whole Empire looks up, should at his old age have had to make his first flight for the sake of humanity and for the sake of peace is worthy of the admiration of the great majority of civilized men. That he should have had to go to beg for peace at the hands of a man they would not even countenance a few years ago speaks very little of English and French foresight and for the statesmanship that dominated the destiny of those two countries at the time. Let us remember that now. Let us be a little hesitant of shouting as we did before that Britons never, never shall be slaves. "Rule Britannia" is a slogan that belongs to a world that is no more. The sea is no longer the crite-



rion of the might of a nation. The air and gas are factors that will count in the wars to come.

The English tradition of Free-trade disappeared when, on the hysteria of a national crisis, a Conservative Government camouflaging itself as "National" came into power. It was the erection of permanent barriers which, though they began in the province of trade, were going to make their resistance felt in every other sphere. It meant that the idea of isolation, which was the last thing that Europe wanted, was gaining more and more ground, and sooner or later it would give place to a nationalism that would at every stage hinder the progress of the fellowship of nations, which, after the (last) war we were aiming at.

We were going to see great things done by this Government. We have. We watched them impose on a starving people the Means Test in order to balance the budget. We saw them drive out of England the only man who could make his personal influence felt in that country and abroad. The abdication of Edward VIII was a triumph for Conservative statesmanship, but the cause of England and the Empire suffered when that monarch left the shores of his country, driven over the Portsmouth road at the dead of night. We saw them make a shameful betrayal of the cause of Abyssinia after having made false promises to enforce sanctions and to preserve the independence of that country by collective action. And now we have seen them lead the country to the brink of war and then to avert it by sacrificing another man's land. What a glorious record this (British) National Government has!

These are some of the things that come back to my mind as we painfully watch once more the enunciation of the maxim that might is right. This has become true because of those who have made such a maxim possible. They have in the past relied on it themselves. To-day they find others have imitated them. It is the sincerest form of flattery!

—*Bombay Chronicle.*

## LET THE BELLS OF WESTMINSTER RING!

October, 1938.

*(My only explanation—and apology—for this article is that we were at that time not in possession of all the facts which made Munich appear a betrayal, rather than a triumph.)*

AS I tuned in to listen to the broadcast of Mr. Chamberlain's return to Heston and his arrival at 10, Downing Street, I could not but help feeling that I was back in England once more.

It reminded me of the hours spent in the rain at the time of the Coronation, of the overnight vigil to see the Jubilee procession of George the Fifth and the several other occasions when the English public had turned out to give vent to their emotions at happenings that had brought happiness to the English people.

Even at this distance of some ten thousand miles, I could still hear the roar of cheers that echoed in Whitehall and as he turned the corner into Downing Street. That little unassuming permanent residence of the British Prime Minister with its black door on which in brass is written the number "10" was joyously decorated with the cheers that greeted him on his return—the only decoration that 10, Downing Street has ever allowed itself.

All this comes back vividly to my mind as over the air I heard a familiar voice commenting on Chamberlain's return.

Chamberlain had come back from what must be recognized as the greatest peace mission of our time. Greater still because it succeeded. The shadow of death which had hung over every home in Europe has lifted and war has remained a nightmare that did not become a reality.

The people of Europe after many days of anxious waiting slept the sleep of the just. In their hearts they had never desired war, whatever their governments may have said. It showed clearly that civilization has progressed if only in its desire to preserve itself.

That is one of the things for which we feel grateful, and to Neville Chamberlain goes the credit of having made peace possible.

It is not necessary now to go into any great detail about what was achieved at Munich. The terms of the agreement are known to all the world. It has been said that they are a betrayal of Czechoslovakia and that the bullying of a dictator has succeeded. Peace, therefore, in the opinion of many people has been achieved with dishonour.

Be that as it may, let us also consider the other point of view which is that Czechoslovakia was destined to that fate and there were many people who from the very inauguration of that new sovereign state were sceptical of its future. These doubts have translated themselves into reality and what was expected has happened. Czechoslovakia has been broken and what was essentially German has reverted to the German

people. If fault must be found let us put the blame where it is really due—on the Treaty of Versailles.

It is said that Chamberlain has done little else than make a sacrifice at the expense of another people and give what was not his to give. Yet what Chamberlain has done must not be judged by itself but in relation to all that preceded the fateful Conference at Munich.

One has to bear in mind the mistakes which British statesmen have made in the past. They have made British foreign policy a disgrace to the people of England. One must remember also how badly England failed to give the world the lead to disarm. One must not forget the days when the German people constantly pointed out to the Allied Powers that the time had come for the revision of the Versailles Treaty and that disarmament must be universal and effective. Those were the mistakes made by Mr. Chamberlain's predecessors which cannot be forgotten when appraising the worth of his achievements at Munich.

It is in view of all this that Munich must be remembered as the turning point in the history of Europe. A certain war has been averted at a time when only a miracle could have saved the millions that were drilled and disciplined and made ready for the slaughter. It laid down, moreover the principle that the method of arbitration was infinitely preferable to that of armed forces, and that disputes, however grave, could be solved peacefully.

That is the great achievement of Chamberlain and the three others in whose hands the fate of Europe lies. They have made it possible for Europe to breathe

for yet a while and for the laughter of little children to be heard once more in the parks instead of the booming of guns and the groaning of bodies in pain.

Life goes on—and life is a very beautiful thing when you contrast it with the horrid spectacle of death, destruction, and utter mutilation. It is from that point of view that I would like to regard the happenings at Munich and the achievements of the British Premier.

He could very easily have stood on his dignity and nursing the pride waited for the German army to take the initiative and then taken part in the world shambles that was to follow. He need not have gone to see Hitler even once. He certainly need not have gone after the second abortive visit. He could have resented the attitude of the Fuehrer and the English people would have fallen in line at one word of command. But he happens to be "a man of peace to the depths of his soul" and that is perhaps why he achieved more than what Baldwin or Lloyd George or any of his recent predecessors.

The soul of Joseph Chamberlain must be rejoicing at this hour. His son has rendered an outstanding service to humanity. He had never thought that Neville was destined for politics and public service. That is why he trained him as a businessman and trained his other son, Austen, to be a politician. The irony of it is that Neville succeeded where Austen before him had not. Perhaps it was because Neville was not tutored in the way of politics but in the ordinary simple ways of living and thinking. It shows that politicians do not always make the greatest success in the real struggle of life and that an ordinary simple man can, in the hour of crisis, go much further.



That is the lesson that we learn as Neville Chamberlain returns from Munich. In the world in which we live there is no place for that diplomacy which was suave but insincere, and straightforward honesty of purpose goes a much longer way in solving the problems of this world.

That is why we heard that the people who cheered the Prime Minister outside Downing Street and the other streets of London were simple, honest-to-God Londoners—the people who would really have been called upon to make the supreme sacrifice. It was their good-wishes and their blessings that was the crowning glory of Chamberlain's spectacular Premiership.

There is no doubt, judging from the way that the crowds in Munich and Goddesberg and other parts of Germany have cheered him, and also the crowds at Heston and in the streets of London that the man of the moment is undoubtedly Neville Chamberlain. For this present moment he has eclipsed the Fuehrer, the Duce, the French Premier and even the great popular Franklin Roosevelt. Let us also join that pæan of praise and wave our hats frantically to the man that must be reckoned as the saviour of humanity.

Therefore, let the bells of Westminster ring!

—*Sunday Standard.*

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